

**Spruce Hill Community Association
Annual Meeting
November 15, 2016
Penn Alexander School
Minutes taken by Mary Ellen McCarty**

Present: *Santoro, Eric; *Calkins, Monica; *Richman, Andrew; *Wagenveld, Mark; *McCarty, Mary Ellen; Alvarez, Veronica; Bosse, Alexa; Bush, Julie; Carr, Tyree; Fayez, Rana; Grossbach, Barry; Gong, Bo; Guffanti, Richard; Halligan, Ed; Hamerman-Brown, Sylvia; Johnston, Evan; Line, Laura; Liu, Roseann; McGarvey, Vicki; Medley, Leslie Moore, Richard; Nelson, Elaine; Potter, John; Rosof, Libby; Santoro, Craig; Waiters, Jackie

Guests:

Taylor Seaks, Kate Samerson, Teodora Gajic Bakic, Yuan Ye, Guo Yingying, Paschalis Doulias, Abby Thaker, Faith Goldstein, Michelle Papachristou, Leila Gretchen Willis, Xiaohoy Zhery, Christina Rosan, Nicole Dugan, Hannah Laurison, Rekla Hagen, Debbie Sanford, Amarilis Acevedo, Juan Miguel Vargo-Cano, Mark Bolender, Deb Green, Jim Shashaty, Nancy Rimmer, Jennifer Feldman, Maya Nayak, Nicole Conasta, Anne Thorferde Thomas, Marlene Gawarkreirs, Amy Neukrug, Jamie Vann, David Vann

Presentation Slides are located online at:

http://www.sprucehillca.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SHCA_annual_meeting_11_15_16.pdf

Introductions - Eric Santoro

Featured Speaker: Michael Farrell, Penn Alexander School Principal

Michael Farrell, the new Penn Alexander School (PAS) principal starting in Fall of 2016, gave a talk about his background, the school's history and what he hopes to achieve in the future.

Principal Farrell served at Independence Charter School, the Science Leadership Academy & Mastery Charter School before his arrival at PAS. He chose PAS because of the inspirational history and legacy of Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander, the school's founder. Mr. Farrell talked about Sadie Alexander's inspirational story and how she was a pioneer for civil rights and education. During the Blue Ribbon Ceremony he had the opportunity to meet her daughters and learn more about her from a personal perspective. He was also inspired by Sheila Sydnor's legacy and track record. These predecessors have reminded him that he has big shoes to fill, and that he is standing on shoulders of giants. Being about to celebrate the blue ribbon award with parents, students and staff has been a great experience for Mr. Farrell.

PAS Mission statement:

Penn Alexander's mission is to maximize the academic and personal competence of all its students to become successful lifelong learners and productive citizens in a diverse and highly technological society.

Principal Farrell emphasized that the PAS Mission Statement is still relevant today. He talked about the many initiatives that will help carry out the mission.

- Special Education and ESL - working with students individually to make sure they have the help they need
- Professional development for teachers and staff
- Partnership with University of Pennsylvania's Education Program
- After school clubs
- Opening communication with families
- Working with Lea School – bringing schools together
- School Advisory Council

Community is very important to Mr. Farrell. He is excited to build community and work with SHCA. All working together – community part of school = school part of community. He is proud about the PAS community and the neighborhoods supporting PAS.

Question & Answers

Q: Are you still looking for involvement in Penn Project?

A: Yes

Q: Is there a recycling program at the school?

A: Recycling has resumed and we are looking into a composting program.

Q: What are your long term plans to incorporate language into curriculum?

A: We are working on planning on working this in. A short term goal is establishing a foreign language club – looking at bringing in partners to help.

Q: Are you open to bringing in sports?

A: Yes – Starting to look for partners and resources but looking into hooking into the middle school team sports

Q: General question about the status of the PAS lottery

A: No plan to give up the lottery – however everyone has been admitted

This is an expensive place to live, the school may be changing the diversity of the neighborhood . We are looking at starting some kind of group committed to community diversity and equity.

Q: Do you accept people from outside catchment if open spots are not filled?

A: No. This is a neighborhood only school

The next lottery enrollment opens in February. Please look at the website for more information to come.

Eric Santoro - SHCA President

Eric Santoro followed Principal Farrell and thanked him for his presentation and use of the PAS cafeteria for the meeting.

Eric gave an overview about SHCA, its location and mission to strengthen the Spruce Hill community and enhance the quality of life for all residence. He introduced its board members including officers and directors. Eric thanked departing SHCA board members including Pauline Borkin, Brett Feldman & Ed Halligan. He talked about the various ways to get involved through committees and annual events. Eric went over the organizations that SHCA supports in the areas of education, youth activities, community spaces and the arts. Eric also discussed SHCA's involvement in Crosstown Coalition since 2015, a Philadelphia collaborative of citywide civic associations working on zoning, land use, education, tax and financial initiatives.

Election of New Board Members - Jamie Vaughn

Slate:

Officers, 2016-2017

President- Eric Santoro
Executive VP – Monica Calkins
VP for Operations – Mark Wagenveld
Secretary – Mary Ellen McCarty
Treasurer – Andrew Richman

Directors (Incumbents), 2016-2018

Julie Bush
Barry Grossbach
Laura Line
Elaine Nelson
Libby Rosof
Jackie Waiters

Directors (New), 2016-2018

Rana Faye
Bo Gong
Evan Johnstone
Lesley Medley

All nominees were voted in.

Treasure's Report - Andrew Richman

Andrew explained the nature of the SHCA organization as a registered 501(C)(4) organization. His report covered the Fiscal Year 2015/16.

Financial Summary:

Total Income= \$40,964.55
Total Expenses = \$33,153.64
SHCA's net income - \$7,810.91

Expenses:

- Building related expenses (PGW, PECO, cleaning, upkeep, upgrades) - \$6,390
- Insurance - (Property and Board) - \$6,116
- Taxes - \$5,431
- May Fair - \$9,455
- Outreach - \$3,752
 - donations to: Penn Alexander, UCity Arts League, St. Mary's Church, Shakespeare in Clark Park, Halloween Parade

Income:

- Property Rental - approximately \$26,412
- May Fair - over \$7,765 (does not include donations to the Spruce Hill Trust)
- Membership Dues - almost \$3,755

May Fair 2016 Summary:

Net Income = \$1,545

- largest support comes from generous contributions to the Trust (\$4,485 in 2016)

Committee Presentations:

See Slides here for more detailed information

http://www.sprucehillca.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SHCA_annual_meeting_11_15_16.pdf

Zoning - Barry Grossbach

Barry showed images of locations of interest in Spruce Hill that have zoning issues.

- 46th & Spruce - Vacant property since it had a fire. There have been many proposals from developers but neighbors are challenging the development – project is currently under review.
- Chester Ave – Site next door to the Jubilee school. The site is a good example of a development done well. The developer worked with the neighborhood to ensure that it fit with the flow of other existing buildings.
- Clarkville – Dumpster enclosure. Open garbage bins is an issue with businesses and absentee landlords in the area. We asked for the dumpster to be eliminated and space created inside the building for storing trash for removal.

- 43rd & Osage - Historical Designation nominated by SHCA this year and the site and it was granted historic designation.
- 40th street Trolley Portal Project breaks ground in December
- 40th and Pine - Construction will begin soon.

Education – Laura Line and Sylvia Hamerman-Brown

Mission statement:

- Support the public education of the children and youth of Spruce Hill.
- Promotes and supports academic achievement, recreational, and cultural activities that enrich the lives of those it serves.
- Dedicated to addressing the unique needs of the families of Spruce Hill area schools.

2016 Activities

- Celebrated the deep contributions of Sheila Sydnor, the first PAS Principal, in her retirement.
- Provided leadership through representation on the PAS School Advisory Council (SAC)
- Participated in the search for a new PAS principal
- PAS playground improvements
- Supported greening Lea School

Looking to the future

- Working with Principal Farrell in building communication and collaboration.
- Continue to help support the outdoor space improvement.
- Participation in PAS School Advisory Council

Business Attraction – Jon Potter

The Business Attraction committee is proactive about identifying new needed businesses and attract them. This year many new businesses were opened in the area including Dottie's Donuts, Youma African Cuisine, Ice Cave, Philly Homebrew, Jinxed, Okawa and Flute & Friends.

Bird Sanctuary – Julie Bush

Julie talked about what and where the Bird Sanctuary is. She talked about the 22 different bird species Sightings in 2016. Some of the accomplishments for the bird sanctuary included maintaining plants and feeding the birds, fundraising and physical improvements. Next year the Bird Sanctuary committee hopes to create a plant database, install larger solar panels and work with the Girl Scouts.

Engagement committee – Vicki McGarvey

This is a brand new committee which hosted its first event is tonight, providing snacks and beverages. Vicki hopes to planning community building events in the future. She encouraged people to get involved.

Greening Blocks Grant Program - Mary Ellen McCarty

Mary Ellen talked about what the block grants can be used for, which is not limited to greening spaces and may include physical improvements to enhance lighting and safety. She encouraged people to apply for the grant and get involved in the committee.

Questions / comments

Announcement: Garden court annual meeting is next week.

Meeting Adjourned.